

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

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R 150700Z MAY 76

FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0191

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0312

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, EG

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF ALEXSHIP

REF: ALEXANDRIA 0284 (NOTAL)

1. STORM AROUND ALEXANDRIA SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION COMPANY AND ITS FOUNDER-DIRECTOR MAHMOUD ISMAIL CONTINUES UNABATED. IN CONVERSATION MAY 10 HE HIMSELF TOOK PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF COMPANY FUTURE. HE TOLD CONGEN COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC SPECIALIST THAT HE DID NOT THINK HE COULD EVER HAVE REAL FREEDOM TO WORK AS SHIPPING AGENT AND BOOKING AGENT AND THAT HE IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING MOVING HIS OPERATIONS TO SAUDI ARABIA.

2. OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEE (HIMSELF A LAWYER) AND OTHER OBSERVERS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE STRONG PERSONAL ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ISMAIL, BELIEVE HE WILL ULTIMATELY WIN HIS LEGAL CASE AGAINST MARITIME TRANSPORT MINISTRY. ISMAIL HIMSELF, IN UNUSUAL MOOD OF SELF-DOUBT FROM USUALLY HYPER-CONFIDENT MAN, THINKS GOE PRESSURES SO GREAT AGAINST HIM THAT HIS LEGAL RIGHT WILL STILL EVENTUALLY BE DENIED.

3. VICTORY IN SUPREME ADMINISTRATIVE COURT WOULD ONLY INCREASE PERSONAL HARASSMENT HE CLAIMS IS DIRECTED AGAINST HIM. THIS
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IS AT TIMES HARDER TO BEAR THAN OFFICIAL HARASSMENT. CONGEN

LOCAL POINTS OUT ISMAIL IS "AN UNEDUCATED MAN" (HIS CLAIM TO USE TITLE "ENGINEER" HE ALLEGEDLY DROPPED RECENTLY IN FACE OF ENGINEERING SOCIETY THREAT TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST HIM). MANY EDUCATED UPPER CLASS PEOPLE SEEM TO RESENT HIS BUSINESS SUCCESS. HIS ROUGH WAYS OF OPERATING FEED THIS RESENTMENT.

4. OCCASION FOR CONVERSATION WAS APPOINTMENT CONGEN ARRANGED FOR VISITING US NAVY LOGISTICS OFFICER SEEKING MORE INFORMATION ON ALEXANDRIA PORT OPERATIONS AND POSSIBLE AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR USN SHIPMENTS THROUGH PORT, SUEZ CANAL TRANSITS AND OTHER USN CONTACTS WITH EGYPTIAN MARITIME AFFAIRS. USN OFFICER SAID ANY DEALINGS SO FAR WITH ALEXSHIP (WE KNOW OF SEVERAL SUEZ TRANSITS OF USN-CHARTERED OIL TANKERS) HAD BEEN VERY SATISFACTORY. ALEXSHIP OFFICE HERE SEEMS EFFICIENT AND WELL-MANAGED. MANY PEOPLE IN ALEXANDRIA NOT PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN ALEXSHIP DISPUTE AND WITH NO PERSONAL QUARREL WITH ISMAIL CONTINUE TO REGARD ALEXSHIP FUTURE AS BAROMETER FOR "OPEN ECONOMIC DOOR" POLICY. IT IS ONE OF VERY FEW THAT HAS PROGRESSED BEYOND "IDEA" STAGE IN TWO YEARS POLICY HAS NOMINALLY BEEN OPERATIVE.
CHASE

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